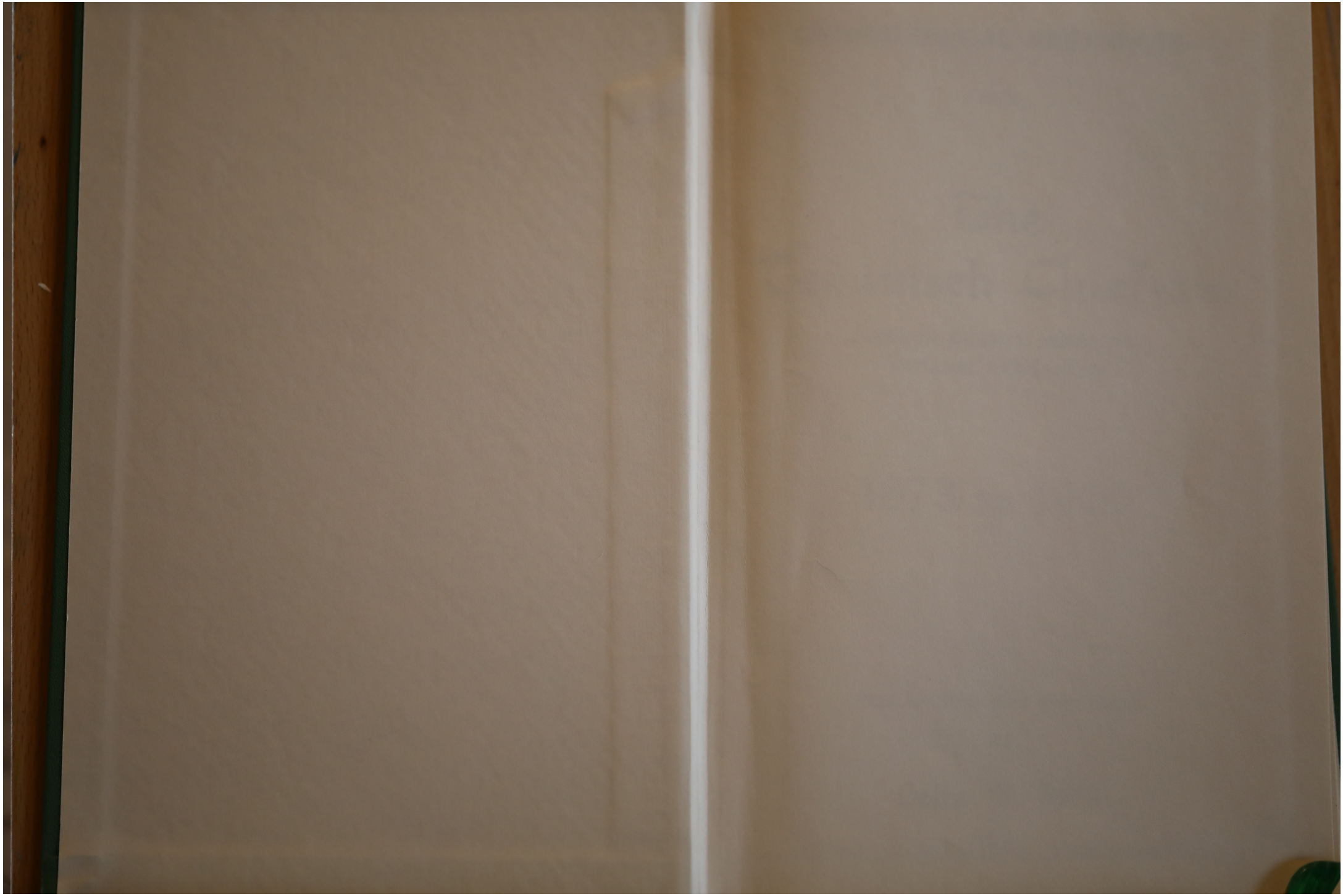

GENEALOGICAL ABSTRACTS

FROM

The Tecumseh Chieftain

JOHNSON COUNTY, NEBRASKA
OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER

1873 to 1900

RESEARCHED AND PUBLISHED

BY

Lelia R. Heil

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1970

The Tecumseh Chieftain

Introduction

This book was compiled as a result of my own research in Johnson County, when I became aware of the vast store house of genealogical data published in early newspapers. I was able to collect letters written to the editor by my ancestors while traveling, many notices of their activities and vital records, making for a more complete and interesting family history. This book makes the largest portion of data readily available to other researchers, though understandably, there is more to be gleaned by the industrious researcher, in addition to the vital records and miscellaneous data herein contained.

All research was done from micro-film copies of The Tecumseh Chieftain, from the earliest issue available starting in 1873 up to 1900. The newspaper, published every Saturday, has an excellent coverage of the entire county, through corresponding editors.

It is to be remembered that birth and death notices were not a matter of county record until 1900, making this source doubly valuable. News was frequently reported of former residents, those out of town, and out of state relatives of residents; these are herein recorded. A complete land tax record was published in 1874 giving the land holders name and a description of his property, which is also included and indexed.

For their earnest efforts in reporting the local news, and the priceless records and clues they left us, the early day editors can be forgiven the occasional misspelling of a name or the misplacing of a date. The Tecumseh Chieftain was established by G. W. and F. M. Fairbrother the last month of 1869. The first full year of printing was 1870. In 1873 the paper was published by Hassler Brothers, and by J. N. Hassler only in 1874. It changed hands in 1875 to J. B. Besack. In 1876 the paper was operated by Barrow and Crow and by 1878 Fairbrother and Crow were the owners. 1881 saw another change to Fairbrother and Swart. Later in 1881 the paper was published by A. H. Swart un-

til 1889 when Dr. F. M. Somers of the Beatrice Express bought the paper. Later in the same year P. A. Brundage became associate proprietor. The Tecumseh Chieftain has been continuously published since the first issue. Carrying on the tradition, today's editors are Duane and Alice Kunzman who bought the paper in February of 1970 from Thurber, Sappenfield and Stull.

The Editor

County History

The very early history of Johnson County is associated with that of Forney. The county was created by an act of the first Territorial Legislature, March 2, 1855. By a further act of the Legislature early in the winter of 1856-'57, Forney was divided by a line running north and south. The name Forney was dropped and the east part named Nemaha and the west Johnson. On the 10th of February an act was passed defining explicitly the boundaries of the new county and calling for an election of county officers at the next annual election.

The county was named in honor of Gen. R. M. Johnson, U.S.A., so prominent in the Black Hawk War. It is bounded on the north by Otoe County, east by Nemaha, south by Pawnee and west by Gage. It is twenty-one miles long east and west and eighteen miles wide north and south and has an area of 378 square miles.

On February 13 1857 an act was passed fixing the seat of justice of Johnson County at the town of Tecumseh. Tecumseh was originally known as Maulding's Settlement. Situated on the old Brownville and Marysville trail, much travel passed through the point and the nucleus once formed, the development of the town was a matter of course. John Maulding, with the aid of William Strong put up the first log house on the site where John Maulding kept a trading post. The name first given the settlement was "Frances" in honor of the wife of Gen. Johnson for whom the county was named. The following year the name of Tecumseh was selected in honor of the noted Indian chief.

To have the county machinery set in full motion, the following persons were commissioned to serve as county officials until the next annual election: James Bishop, Probate Judge; Charles A. Goshen, Clerk of the County and Register of Deeds; Cyrus Wright, Sheriff; James R. Little, Treasurer; Amos R. Brewer, Surveyor; J. Blake Hayes, Supt. of Instruction; Wm. P. Walker, commissioned by Gov. Izard first Notary Public for the county. In the same month, Robert

Wright, Noble B. Strong, Enoch Riggle and Robert Johnson were appointed Constables.

The Board of County Commissioners, composed of William P. Walker, J. D. Muchmore and J. B. Sharrett, held the first meeting at Tecumseh, April 13, 1857. Israel Loomis and Rowan Irwin were qualified as Justices of the Peace, April 17, 1857.

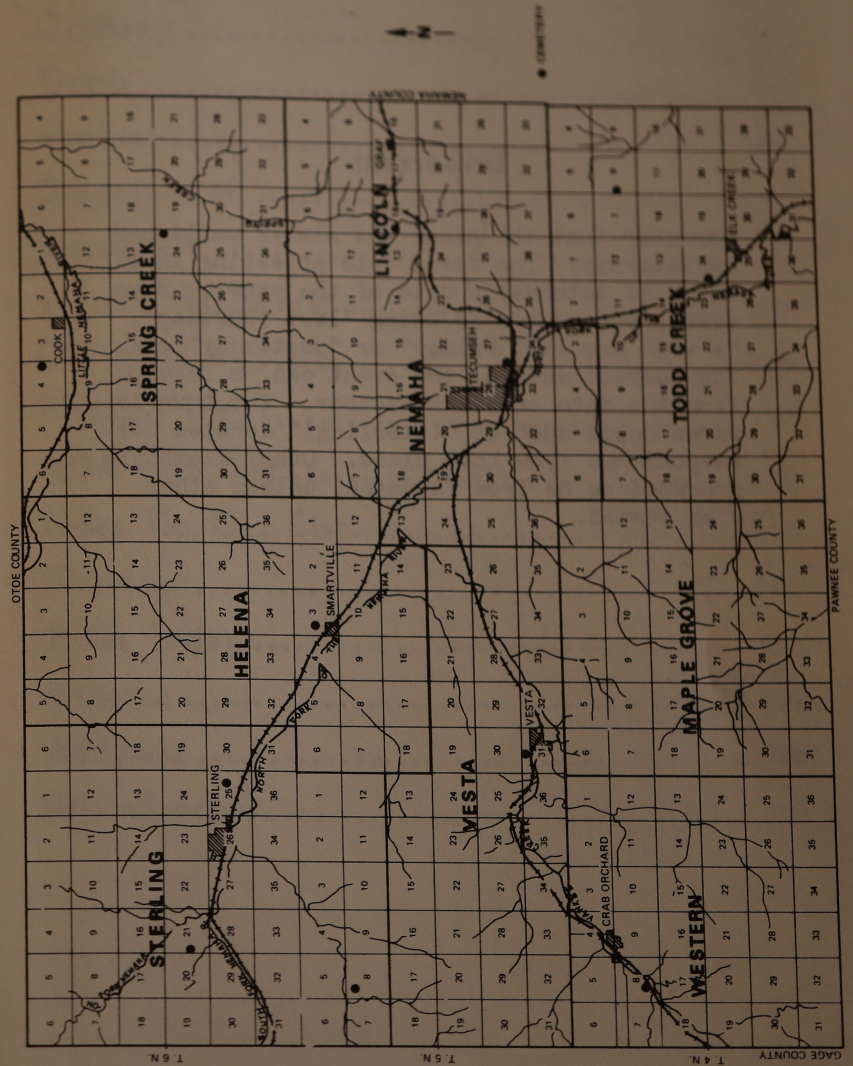
The following persons were appointed judges of election at the first election held in the county: District No. 1, David McClure, E. D. Allen, William Rose; District No. 2, William Brewer, John Sears, John Sayre; and District No. 3, Rowan Irwin, John Riggles, A. R. Hunt.

The first regular election was held on August 3, 1857. Appended is a partial abstract of the vote cast in the county: Representative to Congress, Fenner Ferguson; District Attorney, William McLennan; Representative to Territorial Legislature, A. J. Benedict; Probate Judge, John W. Sayre; Sheriff, Cyrus Wright; County Clerk, C. A. Gasher; Treasurer, J. R. Little; Superintendent of Public Instruction, William Strong; Surveyor, Amos R. Brewer; and County Commissioner, David McClure.

The above county officials, duly qualified and served, as was the territorial custom, one year. The vote cast seemed to indicate a population of not more than 200 in the county.

The second annual election took place August 2, 1858, ninety-five votes being polled. The following result was obtained: Member of Council, R. W. Furnas; Representative, W. S. Townsend; County Commissioner, William P. Walker and Sheriff, Noble B. Strong.

1900 Johnson County Map



Important

Remember that the paper was always published on Saturday. The first date appearing in all items is Saturday's date of the paper. Some events were noted as being "last Thursday", "a week ago last Friday" or "yesterday" etc. The correct date of the event can be figured from the date of the newspaper. The town in parenthesis such as "(Sterling)" denotes correspondence from that place. Other items are presumed to be from Tecumseh, unless otherwise stated.

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